



# U.S. Embassy Santiago Newsletter

Information for American Citizens in Chile  
Volume 5, Issue 1

January - March 2009



## THE SUMMER EDITION

### Medical Insurance: Know Before You Go

Even the best planned vacations can be interrupted by emergencies. You can lose luggage, get sick, break a leg while hiking Torres del Paine, or worse. These events can cost you and your family a lot of money.

You have (hopefully) medical insurance. But many policies only cover treatment if you are in the U.S. Without travel insurance, you have to pay for hospitalization or treatment you receive while overseas. If you are visiting a country where doctor's bills and emergency procedures are expensive (as in Chile) and where health risks are high, travel insurance is a necessity. Note that Medicare will not reimburse medical expenses overseas.

Check your coverage before you leave your home country. If your plan doesn't cover medical or other emergency expenses overseas, you should consider getting travel insurance before you depart. It provides coverage and peace of mind for the duration of your travel.



*Summer in the Andes*

### ACS: The Facebook Way

Yes, it's true. We're now on Facebook. The U.S. Embassy is now connected to the world of social networking. You'll find general ACS information, important tips for students abroad, updated country-specific information, and links to other student-related State Department pages. Our Facebook page also includes study abroad resources for Chilean students who want to study in the U.S. To become one of our Facebook fans, just search "U.S. Embassy Santiago." Or you can find us at [www.facebook.com/pages/Las-Condes-Chile/US-Embassy-Santiago/92125180021](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Las-Condes-Chile/US-Embassy-Santiago/92125180021).

### Crime: How Not to Become an ACS Case

Crime rates are low to moderate throughout Chile and are relatively moderate in Santiago, Valparaiso, and other major cities. American citizens visiting Chile should be as careful in cities as they would be in any city in the United States. Few Americans have been victims of violent crimes. However, tourists are always at a heightened risk for pick-pocketing, purse or camera snatching, and theft from backpacks and rental cars. Such crimes have been reported in all areas of Chile frequented by tourists.

In Santiago, visitors should be especially alert to the possibility of crime at the bus terminal, Plaza de Armas, Mercado Central, Plaza Italia, and at major hotels and restaurants in Las Condes, Vitacura, Providencia, Suecia, and Bellavista. In Valparaiso, visitors should be especially alert in the port and adjoining tourist areas. Tourists using taxis in Santiago should be alert to possible currency switching scams. Tourist should also be alert while taking public transportation. The emergency number for the police (Carabineros) is 133.

## **ACS: Our Do's and Don'ts**

What We Can Do: Provide passport services; register the birth of children born abroad eligible to acquire U.S. citizenship; register U.S. citizens as part of the Warden System for potential evacuation; provide notary and authentication services; offer a list of local attorneys and doctors; attempt to locate missing persons in Chile; relay emergency messages to and from family back home; provide voting information and federal tax forms; obtain a social security number; and liaise with agencies on federal benefits issues.

What We Don't Do: Act as a travel agent or employment agency; locate lost property; prepare tax returns or translations; authenticate U.S. issued documents, such as birth, marriage, or death certificates; issue U.S. police records; renew or replace driver's licenses; collect or forward mail; cash checks; provide legal advice or intervene in judicial cases; and locate or provide information on persons in the U.S.

## **Want to Join the Diplomatic Corps?**

Interested in becoming a U.S. Foreign Service Officer? It all begins with the Foreign Service exam, which will be administered from February 7-14, 2009. The nearest test locations will be at the U.S. Embassies in Buenos Aires and Lima. Each post will administer the test on one or more days during this eight-day window. If you are interested, you must complete your online registration before 11:59 p.m. January 28 (CST) to schedule an overseas test seat. You can register at [www.careers.state.gov](http://www.careers.state.gov).

## **Or, Are You Thinking of Retiring?**

If you are nearing age 62 or 66, please see the Social Security website [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) to learn about eligibility. Overseas filers cannot apply online. You must apply through the U.S. Embassy. Contact the ACS Unit to obtain applications.

If you are currently receiving benefits, sign up for direct deposit. It's an efficient and effective way to receive your benefits. We can help you sign up with either of the two Chilean banks participating in the Direct Deposit Program. For questions related to Federal Benefits please contact us at [SantiagoFBU@state.gov](mailto:SantiagoFBU@state.gov).

## **Useful Travel Information**

Traveling soon? The State Department issues country specific information (CSI) for almost every country in the world. The CSI contains detailed information on safety and security issues about the country as well as general information and links. For a few countries with serious safety and security issues, the State Department issues travel warnings. The following is a link to the CSI for Chile: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1088.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1088.html).

## **ACS Welcomes New Staff**

We are pleased to welcome Camila Viroto. Prior to ACS, Camila worked in our Non-Immigrant Visa Unit. She previously worked as a community outreach specialist in Hyannis, Massachusetts.



*Summer in Antofagasta*  
by Antonio Bracani

## **Contact Information and ACS Hours**

Address: Av. Andrés Bello 2800, Las Condes, Santiago

Phone: (56) (2) 330-3000

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Walk-In Hours: Mon-Fri, 8:30 to 11:30 am

Appointments: Wed, 2:30 to 4:00 pm

Upcoming holiday closings: January 19, February 16, April 10, May 1

The ACS Unit is closed on the First Friday of each month for in-house staff training. In the months of January, May, and July, we will move this date to the second Friday of the month due to holidays. We will close on the following dates: January 9, February 6, March 6, April 3, May 8, June 5, July 10, August 7, September 4, October 2, November 6, and December 4.